

displaying on the client system to the help-seeker at least one available expert with corresponding expert information that satisfies the help-seeker's request, the expert information includes expert availability information displayed through an applet downloaded from the server system, the expert availability information includes an expert availability indicator that displays a waiting time for each available expert displayed and an average amount of time the expert spends assisting a help-seeker;

prompting the help-seeker to select at least one available expert from the display based on the expert availability information; and

contacting the selected expert through the client system via at least one of instant messaging, on-line meeting, and on-line chat.

13. (once amended) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of contacting the selected expert further comprises the step of using user input into a user interface to select a free expert or join a queue of an expert currently helping another user.

14. (once amended) A method according to Claim 13 wherein said step of contacting the selected expert further comprises the step of using user input to select a free expert or join a queue of an expert currently helping another user after having previously selected the queue of a different expert.

15. (once amended) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of contacting the selected expert further comprises the step of selecting an expert based on a keyword match.

17. (twice amended) A system for indicating expert availability to a help-seeker, through an applet, from a pool of experts, said system comprising:

a server system;

a client system configured with a browser, said client system connected to said server system; and